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# More Training, More Reforms: New York City Outlines Changes to Protest Response

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**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today updated New Yorkers on the City’s new guidance for protests. The changes, made in the wake of last summer’s protests following the killing of George Floyd, build on the recommendations made by Department of Investigation to protect the first amendment rights of protestors and legal observers.

“There were clear lessons to be learned from the protest response last year and a desire to see real, on the ground changes,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “We’ve taken these recommendations seriously and our message to New Yorkers is clear: your City is here to uplift your voice and protect your right to protest peacefully while maintaining a safe community.”

“The NYPD remains committed to facilitating lawful, non-violent protests. Protest, freedom of speech and assembly are guaranteed by the Constitution that we are all sworn to uphold. We feel that the constructive recommendations of the City’s Department of Investigation and the Law Department have been helpful in developing an improved approach to organized protest. We have made significant strides in implementing the most practical aspects of those recommendations so that they are already in effect in the field. We continue to develop and implement others.” said **Police Commissioner Dermot Shea**.

The NYPD has made a number of reforms and improvements in their approach to handling protests, drawing from recommendations made by the Department of Investigation, Law Department, and their own internal review.

These changes include, but are not limited to:

- Designating representatives from NYPD Community Affairs as key liaisons on the ground at protests
- Improved access for legal observers

- Better collaboration and coordination with protest organizers, clergy, and community members before and during protests
- Staging specialized units away from demonstrations to reduce the potential for escalation
- Configuring police barricades as to not unreasonably restrict movement
- Ensuring that feedback from community staff on the ground at protests is incorporated into official guidance and training for officers

Since last summer, the NYPD has also completed new field trainings for approximately 10,000 of its officers. This training is ongoing and outlines how officers should protect the first amendment rights of protestors, including appropriate crowd-control tactics and de-escalation involving large-scale incidents. Kettling is not an acceptable tactic and will not be used by the Department. Additionally, a new training program—Constitutional Policing at Community Events—will also launch this month in response to the specific protest recommendations set forth by the Department of Investigation, the City Law Department, and the NYPD’s own internal review.

New Yorkers can also track the progress of the NYPD’s implementation of the Department of Investigation’s recommendations through the City’s online tracker.

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